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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this manual, which accompanies a video program, is to provide general background information for foreign language teachers who are, or soon will be, teaching in total, partial, or two-way immersion classrooms. Part of a series of video programs, this manual defines the negotiation of the meaning process and highlights specific strategies used by teachers to communicate their messages clearly to students, to understand students' messages as they communicate in the second language, and to help students expand and refine their second language skills. This teacher's manual and the accompanying video may be used in a variety of ways. The viewer may first wish to read the paper by Marguerite Ann Snow in the section "Background Reading," and then view the video program and complete the related activities included in the manual, or the viewer may wish to first watch the video, read the articles, and complete the activities in the manual. Three "negotiation of meaning" checklists are included. (Contains 20 references.) (VWL)

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NEGOTIATION OF MEANING

Division of Academic Skills
Office of Instruction and Program Development
Montgomery County Public Schools
Rockville, Maryland

1989

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NEGOTIATION OF MEANING

TEACHER'S ACTIVITY MANUAL

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PREFACE

Video production

The production of this video program and manual was funded by a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Title VI, International Research and Studies: Improving Foreign Language Methodology Through Immersion Teacher Training. This grant was developed and implemented by the Office of Instruction and Program Development, Department of Academic Skills, Foreign Languages, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland, from July, 1988, to June, 1989. The activities for this grant were carried out by Eileen Lorenz, immersion resource teacher and Myriam Met, foreign language coordinator.

The production of this program would not have been possible without the cooperation and support of the elementary immersion staff and students of the three Montgomery County Public Schools immersion programs: Oak View, Rock Creek Forest, and Rolling Terrace elementary schools. Montgomery County Public Schools television services staff members also made significant contributions to this project.

Upon request, this manual and video program will be distributed to school districts and institutions of higher education to be used for nonprofit training workshops and research projects. Requests for these materials should be accompanied by a $25 check made payable to Montgomery County Public Schools. Requests should be addressed to:

Foreign Language Coordinator
Department of Academic Skills
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the video program and manual

The purpose of the program and manual is to provide general background information for foreign language teachers who are, or will soon be, teaching in total, partial or two-way immersion classrooms. The third in a series of video programs, Negotiation of Meaning defines the negotiation of meaning process and highlights specific strategies used by teachers to communicate their messages clearly to students, to understand students' messages as they communicate in the second language, and to help students to expand and refine their second language skills.

How to use the video program and manual

The Teacher's Activity Manual and the video have been designed to complement one another and may be used in a variety of ways. The viewer may first wish to read the articles found in the section, "Background Reading," and then view the video program and complete the related activities included in the manual. Or, the viewer may wish first to watch the video, read the articles and then complete the activities in the manual.

The video and accompanying activity manual may be used effectively by either one teacher or by a group of teachers. Multiple viewings to review specific sections of the video provide opportunities to use the program to support a variety of objectives. Six different classroom scenarios that illustrate negotiation of meaning strategies are presented. Viewing these scenarios several times is highly recommended to reinforce the highlighted strategies. In addition, the scenarios presented may be viewed to identify negotiation of meaning strategies other than those selected for illustration in the video program.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY I

PREVIEWING ACTIVITY

Before viewing the video program, reflect on how you would define the term **negotiation of meaning**, an important part of any communication process. In order to help you do this, explore the following activity with a partner.

I. Explain to a colleague in English how to perform a task that you do well, but with which your colleague is not familiar. For example, you might explain how to change a bicycle tire, change the oil in your car, or prepare a special recipe. After you have completed your explanation, use the following questions to assist in listing specific strategies that helped both communicate effectively.

- o What did you do to get your message across?
- o How did you help your colleague get messages across?
- o How did you help your colleague extend and refine language to include new or specialized language used in your explanation?

Change roles and follow the same procedure so that your partner explains a task to you. Review the same three questions to identify common and differing strategies.

II. Using your list of strategies that helped you and your partner communicate more clearly, note your definition of negotiation of meaning.

ACTIVITY II

DEFINITION

Negotiation of meaning is the process by which participants in an interaction arrive at understanding through a variety of communication strategies. (See Snow, p. 1.) Negotiation of meaning in the classroom is when teachers and students work together to make sure they understand each other. It's the give and take as they ask each other questions, discuss ideas, and share their thoughts. In this video program, the three teacher roles in the negotiation of meaning process explored are:

- o getting the meaning of what you say across to students.
- o understanding communications from students.
- o helping students extend and refine their communication skills.

During daily communication, negotiation of meaning is an integrated process that happens on a continual basis; most often several different strategies are used simultaneously or in quick succession. Because this video program is intended for teacher training, the negotiation of meaning process is described primarily from the teacher's point of view and has been separated into three teacher roles. As you become more aware of your everyday use of negotiation of meaning strategies, you will see that this separation is an arbitrary one.

The following activities have been designed to provide you with opportunities to reflect on, and observe, negotiation of meaning strategies used daily.

ACTIVITY II - continued

DEFINITION

I. Observe two people engaged in conversation. Using the negotiation of meaning checklist included in this manual, note how many strategies are used to negotiate the meaning of what each person is trying to communicate to the other. Try to answer the following questions:

- o What does each speaker do to get a message across to the other person?
- o How does each speaker help the other speaker get a message across?
- o How does each speaker help to expand and refine the language of the other speaker?

II. Recall a situation where you were interacting with a native speaker of your second language. As you reflect on a particular situation, try to answer the following questions:

- o What did the native speaker do to make sure that you were understanding?
- o What did the native speaker do to help you get your message across?
- o What did the native speaker do to help you expand and refine communication in your second language?
- o How did you use input from the native speaker to express yourself more precisely or accurately?

III. If possible, observe an immersion class and, using the checklist, note the negotiation of meaning strategies used by teachers and students. Remember to observe students working together to see how negotiation of meaning enters into student-to-student interactions.

ACTIVITY III

APPLICATION

Most likely, you noticed during the activities suggested in this manual that negotiation of meaning is a process that happens naturally wherever communication is taking place. Your heightened awareness of the role it plays in communication is likely to increase both your application and refinement of its various strategies.

As you model negotiation of meaning strategies for your students, they will begin to use these strategies in their efforts to communicate. For example, increasing the availability of real objects, or representations of real objects, will increase opportunities for students to make use of these items in communicating with you and their peers as they go about their daily tasks. Below are some activities that will give you some practice in applying negotiation of meaning strategies and in incorporating them in lessons as you plan.

I. Try out your negotiation of meaning strategies on a partner.

   Pretend that you are a parent explaining a picture book to your two-year-old child. Ask a third person to observe the interaction and note what strategies are used to adjust your language to the level of the child. If possible, try this activity out with a young child.

ACTIVITY III

APPLICATION - continued

II. Try out your negotiation of meaning strategies on a partner using your immersion language. Select someone who has no experience in that language. Explain a simple task, such as arranging five objects from the shortest to the longest. If possible, ask a third person to observe the interaction and note what strategies you use to adjust your language. Now, following the same procedure, ask your partner to use the immersion language to explain a task to you.

III. Reflecting on the negotiation of meaning strategies presented in the video program, review the attached list of strategies that might be used to teach a Grade 1 science lesson on objects that float and sink. Check off those strategies that are based on negotiation of meaning strategies that would be most effectively used to enhance communication in an immersion classroom as you work to:

- o make yourself understood.
- o help your students communicate their thoughts.
- c help your students to expand and refine their language skills..

ACTIVITY III

APPLICATION - continued

Which of the following strategies would best enhance the negotiation of meaning process in a beginning class?

_____Demonstrate the concept of float and sink.

_____Talk about the concept of float and sink.

_____Demonstrate how to predict, and how to test a prediction of whether an object floats or sinks.

_____Talk about how to predict, and test a prediction of whether an object floats or sinks.

_____Talk about how to record the results of the float/sink experiment.

_____Demonstrate how to record the results of the float/sink experiment.

_____ Provide pairs of students with a written worksheet to record predictions.

_____Provide pairs of students with a pictorial worksheet to record predictions.

_____ Provide students with a nonverbal signal to predict whether an object will float or sink (thumbs up or thumbs down).

_____Talk about the results of students' predictions and experiments.

_____Ask students to show their predictions and the results of their experiments. Record the results on a graphic organizer.

_____Sing a song about float and sink.

_____Sing a song about float and sink, miming the concept of float and sink as each concept is mentioned.

_____As a review on the following day, talk about the concept of float and sink.

_____As a review on the following day, ask students to classify into the same objects used for experimentation into the category of float or sink.

ACTIVITY III

APPLICATION - continued

IV. Consider that students in grades K - 2 have less well developed second language skills than students in Grades 3 - 6. Recognizing that negotiation of meaning strategies are used at all levels, review the Negotiation of Meaning Checklist on page 16 and discuss with a colleague which strategies you think may be used more often in the Grades 3-6.

ACTIVITY IV

PLANNING FOR NEGOTIATION OF MEANING

Negotiation of meaning is a complex process that is present in all classrooms. However, because of students' lack of, or limited knowledge of the second language, the negotiation of meaning process is more complex and plays a more critical role in successful communication in an immersion classroom than in a non-immersion classroom. While negotiation of meaning strategies happen quite naturally, planning to incorporate strategies in specific lessons will increase successful communications between you and your students.

I. Referring to the negotiation of meaning checklist, plan a lesson, or review a lesson that you have taught, incorporating as many as possible of the negotiation of meaning strategies. Present the lesson or a short portion to a group of colleagues. Ask them to identify which negotiation of meaning strategies you used. Discuss the strategies and the use of other possible strategies in the lesson, keeping in mind the three aspects of negotiation of meaning:

   - o getting the meaning of what you say across to the students
   - o understanding communications from the students
   - o helping students to extend and refine their communication skills

II. The negotiation of meaning process plays an important role in the communication process as you teach the curriculum and as you conduct daily classroom routines with students without the use of English. It may be helpful to ask yourself which negotation of meaning strategies would be most helpful to plan to use as you teach or communicate with beginning students to:

   - o compare healthy food and junk food.
   - o call students to buy lunch tickets.
   - o call students to line up for music class.
   - o call students to sit in a circle on the rug.

ACTIVITY V

REVIEW

Now that you have viewed the video program, complete the activities that follow and read the background paper "Negotiation of Meaning in the Immersion Classroom" by M. A. Snow. Also, review your definition of negotiation of meaning formulated during the Previewing Activity. Compare this definition and list of strategies with those presented in the video program and in the Teacher's Activity Manual. How many of the same, and how many additional, strategies did you identify prior to viewing the program? You may want to revise your definition and list of negotiation of meaning strategies to include strategies and suggestions presented in the video program.

NEGOTIATION OF MEANING CHECKLISTS

NEGOTIATION OF MEANING CHECKLIST*

VERBAL STRATEGIES	TEACHER
Addition of new information to an utterance	
Expanding one-word answers	
Expanding/refining language	
Matching language with experience	
Restating students' use of English in foreign language	
Slower rate of speech Simplified vocabulary Simpler sentences	

Conversation management	TEACHER	STUDENT
Defining by example	/	
Paraphrasing	/	
Requesting clarification	/	

NONVERBAL STRATEGIES	TEACHER	STUDENT
Matching what students hear with what they see o real objects o representations of real objects o graphic organizers	/	
Facial expressions		
Gestures		

* You may identify negotiation of meaning strategies in addition to those highlighted on screen

NEGOTIATION OF MEANING CHECKLIST*

VERBAL STRATEGIES	TEACHER
Addition of new information to an utterance	
Expanding one-word answers	
Expanding/refining language	
Matching language with experience	
Restating students' use of English in foreign language	
Slower rate of speech	
Simplified vocabulary	
Simpler sentences	

Conversation management	TEACHER	STUDENT
Defining by example		
Paraphrasing		
Requesting clarification		

NONVERBAL STRATEGIES	TEACHER	STUDENT
Matching what students hear with what they see o real objects o representations of real objects o graphic organizers		
Facial expressions		
Gestures		

* You may identify negotiation of meaning strategies in addition to those highlighted on screen.

3

NEGOTIATION OF MEANING CHECKLIST*

VERBAL STRATEGIES	TEACHER
Addition of new information to an utterance	
Expanding one-word answers	
Expanding/refining language	
Matching language with experience	
Restating students' use of English in foreign language	
Slower rate of speech	
Simplified vocabulary	
Simpler sentences	

Conversation management	TEACHER	STUDENT
Defining by example		
Paraphrasing		
Requesting clarification		

NONVERBAL STRATEGIES	TEACHER	STUDENT
Matching what students hear with what they see		
o real objects		
o representations of real objects		
o graphic organizers		
Facial expressions		
Gestures		

* You may identify negotiation of meaning strategies in addition to those highlighted on screen.

BACKGROUND READING

NEGOTIATION OF MEANING IN THE IMMERSION CLASSROOM

Marguerite Ann Snow
California State University, Los Angeles

Negotiation of meaning, the focus of this paper, is the process by which participants in an interaction arrive at understanding through a variety of communication strategies. The term was first coined to characterize the strategies used by parents in talking to their young children (Wells, 1981); more recently, it has been applied to the process of second language learning as well. In fact, Genesee (1987) points out that the instructional style of immersion teachers is an excellent example of negotiation of meaning in the classroom setting. Just what does negotiation of meaning entail and what is its significance to you, the immersion teacher or prospective immersion teacher?

Negotiation of meaning is a very descriptive term. It describes a complex, collaborative process which occurs regularly in human interaction. The term connotes the reciprocity entailed in the process of human communication. Negotiation of any kind involves a give and take, a back and forth until the parties reach agreement. Applied to the language learning context, agreement means understanding or learning. This paper will consider the theoretical bases for the process of negotiation of meaning from the multi-disciplinary perspectives of anthropology, applied linguistics, education, and psychology. We will look at this

complex process from the perspective of the immersion teacher faced with meeting the needs of second language learners. Specifically, three questions will be addressed: How do immersion teachers get their message across? How do they understand what the students are trying to say via their second language? And, how do they help students to extend and refine their communication skills in their second language?

Theoretical Bases for Negotiation of Meaning

The Role of Input

In the early 1960's, Ferguson (1964) identified features of adult speech which were modified for addressing children learning their first language. He noticed that adults appear to use "caregiver" speech or "baby talk", because they think certain words are easier for children to understand or pronounce. Adult speakers, for example, replace the words for animals with words for their sounds such as "woof woof" for dog, or use a diminutive form of the adult word such as "doggie". The domains of baby talk usually are those topics which children first talk about - kinship terms, bodily functions and routines, names of games and toys, and expressions of approval or disapproval. Adults also avoid certain words and often reduce word endings. Snow (1972) found that adults used fewer plural endings (e.g., plural -s or possessive -'s) and articles (the, a) when speaking to two-year-old children than to ten-year-olds, and fewer to ten-year-olds than to adults. Ferguson (1971) also noticed that adults make some of the same kinds of modifications when they talk to foreigners. They avoid certain

words which they assume the non-native speaker does not know. Instead of using pronouns, they may repeat the antecedent noun in order to make the subject or object more explicit. When addressing non-natives, they also repeat, rephrase, and paraphrase more often and use such extra-linguistic aids as gestures and facial expressions. Moreover, the language used by teachers when addressing non-natives shares many of these same characteristics.

Analysis of discourse data drawn from these studies of both first and second language learning has revealed that the adjustments made by speakers for the sake of learners are quite similar. They speak more slowly and clearly, use concrete referents as often as possible, and use shorter, less complex sentences. Speakers of baby talk, foreigner talk, and teacher talk all assume, either implicitly or explicitly, that these linguistic modifications are in some way facilitative of comprehension, at minimum, and possibly of learning in general. In other words, the adjustments and modifications serve to help negotiate the message by adding multiple cues to meaning and increasing the comprehensibility of the message through the various strategies described above.

The notion of comprehensibility lies at the heart of a theory of second language acquisition developed by Krashen (1982). According to Krashen's input hypothesis, we acquire language by understanding messages in that language through comprehensible input. He believes that the successes of certain language teaching methodologies can be attributed to the amount of comprehensible

input which learners receive. So, for example, immersion programs ensure that students will receive a lot of comprehensible input by separating or "sheltering" them from native speaking peers of the immersion language for purposes of instruction. In Krashen's words, "sheltering" puts all the students "in the same linguistic boat". Language learning occurs in a supportive environment where input is comprehensible because it is specially tailored to the second language learners' current levels of proficiency. In fact, Krashen maintains that "comprehensible subject-matter teaching is language teaching " since the focus is on what is being said, not how it is said (1984, p. 62).

Sheltering of second language learners from native speakers is a key programmatic feature of the majority of immersion programs in the United States and Canada. Recently, however, several "two-way" or "bilingual" immersion programs have been established. In this model, English-speaking and limited English proficient students are grouped for purposes of instruction. So, for example, in a two-way Spanish immersion program, native English speakers and native Spanish speakers share the same classroom. The English speakers learn in Spanish as they would in a regular Spanish immersion program; the Spanish speakers are schooled initially in their first language as in many bilingual education programs around the country. The goal is for the two groups of students to interact in their respective second languages, thereby receiving and giving peer input in addition to teacher input. In a two-way immersion program, the teacher must provide comprehensible input

to the English speakers in their second language without "watering" down the language for the native speakers who need quality input for normal first language development. Clearly, the process of negotiation of meaning in a two-way immersion program presents a great challenge to the immersion teacher.

Wong-Fillmore (1985) was interested in how teachers' language use affects language learning. Specifically, she asked the question "When does teacher talk work as input?" In a large-scale study of over forty classroom which had sizable numbers of second language learners (learning English as a second language in mainstream classes), Wong-Fillmore examined the characteristics of the language used in lessons that seemed to work well for language learners. The first finding of her study was that clear separation of languages was essential. In other words, translation or concurrent instruction in both languages did not promote success in language learning. Separation of languages forces students to utilize all the cues available in instruction to negotiate the message; they cannot wait for the message to be delivered in their first language. This separation of languages is a key feature of immersion programs. A second finding of the study was that the emphasis in successful classrooms was on communication. Wong-Fillmore noted that the language used in the classroom was "in the service" of communication of subject matter to students, a point which reiterates Krashen's belief that subject matter teaching is language teaching.

The third finding of the Wong-Fillmore study is particularly

interesting in light of the earlier discussion of the range of adjustments and modifications used by speakers when communicating with language learners. She found that an important feature of the successful classes she observed was that ungrammatical or "reduced foreigner-talk" forms were never used. However, examination revealed that the teachers' language was probably not as complex as it might have been for native speakers of the same grade level. She also found that the language of the teachers' reflected an "instructional" register - that is its purpose was to convey information and teach skills and, therefore, tended to be more "precise" and more "expository". Thus, when working with native speakers, teachers can assume more - that students will understand them. Immersion teachers cannot make this assumption. They need to communicate their objectives and negotiate their message in a variety of ways to ensure understanding.

The fourth finding of the study was that successful teachers adopted patterns or routines for their lessons. Specifically, the teachers often used the same sentence frame to present materials within a given lesson. For example, teachers might define new words within a lesson words with a frame such as "A chef is a person who..." or "A butcher is a person who...". These routines not only facilitate comprehension of new or difficult vocabulary items, but also call attention to the discourse patterns and the structural regularities of the target language. In a similar vein, the use of repetition was the fifth feature of successful classes. Teachers provided multiple opportunities for students to process

the same information. The repetitions were rarely identical; teachers used a variety of techniques such as paraphrase or exemplification to repeat information. Again, the repetitions provided multiple cues to meaning while also providing models of alternate ways to state information.

The last finding of the Wong-Fillmore study concerned teacher skill at tailoring their input to fit the varying levels of student proficiency and the complexity of the material being covered. For instance, teachers usually asked open-ended questions or questions requiring complex structures to students who they knew could handle the language demands of the questions. In contrast, with students who were less able to respond orally, they asked questions which required shorter responses. These differential questioning patterns helped to extend and refine the language of the more able students, while providing reasonable tasks and a sense of success for the student whose second language skills were less developed. Gradually as their language skills developed, they too would be challenged to perform more linguistically demanding tasks. The study also found that successful teachers nearly always repeated the one word or short responses initially supplied by the students and expanded them into full sentences, thereby providing models of more complex input.

In sum, the results of the Wong-Fillmore study tell us a great deal about the kinds of language which successful teachers use when communicating with second language learners. They shed some light on the complex process of negotiation of meaning. Teacher talk

that works as input is rich in its variety. It builds in redundancy through the use of routines and patterns, provides students with multiple cues to meaning, and is tailored to each student's emerging level of proficiency. It aims to help learners expand and refine their linguistic repertoire by gaining greater command over the forms, functions, and uses of the new language.

The Language of School

A second theoretical perspective from which to examine negotiation of meaning is the literature investigating aspects of the language of school. A number of scholars have attempted to describe the types of language used in school. Snow (1987) characterizes the language of the home as "contextualized". It tends to deal with shared background knowledge, for example, about the family, the house, pets, or common experiences such as holidays, vacations, or important events. In addition, the language used in the home often has a "here and now" focus. Talk centers around concrete objects within the present time frame. In contrast, the language of school is "decontextualized" - it does not assume shared background knowledge among participants. Furthermore, the language of school becomes more decontextualized as students progress through school. By the upper elementary school grades, information is mainly disseminated through reading texts and lectures rather than through experiential activities typical of the early school years. To be successful in school, immersion students must learn the kinds of language skills required to perform academic tasks which rely on written language.

The work of Cummins has been very influential in the past few years and has powerful implications for instructional pedagogy, in general, and specifically for our topic here. Cummins (1981) proposed that language proficiency can be conceptualized along two continua. Look at Figure 1. The horizontal line depicts the range of contextual support available for expressing or receiving meaning. At one extreme of the horizontal line are "context-embedded" communicative situations; at the other extreme are "context-reduced" situations. In context-embedded communicative situations, participants can negotiate meaning using a variety of contextual supports such as gestures, visuals, feedback from the speaker/listener, and actual physical objects. The speaker, thus, has access to multiple cues to meaning. In contrast, in context-reduced situations, the participants have only linguistic cues to meaning. The learner has to access meaning from a much more limited set of cues - for example, through a reading text or a lecture. As discussed, the social language of home and the playground tends to be more context-embedded while the academic language of the classroom tends to be context-reduced. To do well in school, students must have the requisite language skills to function in the context-reduced setting of the classroom.

Now, look at the vertical line in Figure 1. At the top of the vertical continuum are "cognitively undemanding" communicative situations. In these situations, the tasks and activities have either already been mastered or require little cognitive attention to begin with. At the lower end are "cognitively demanding"

situations - where the tasks and activities require active cognitive involvement on the part of the learner. Clearly, most academic activities in school are cognitively demanding, and as such to be successful in school students must be able to operate linguistically in both cognitively demanding and context-reduced situations.

Cummins' theoretical framework offers important implications for general instructional pedagogy. The framework helps us better recognize the cognitive and linguistic demands placed on all types of learners in school. Clearly, however, the demands are greater for students being schooled in their second language, whether for non-English speaking students in ESL programs or English-speaking students in foreign language immersion programs. The challenge for the classroom teacher is how to increase the degree of contextual support and, thereby, make context-reduced and cognitively demanding more context-embedded. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, the use of pictures and real objects in addition to the spoken language make context-reduced lessons more context-embedded. These multiple cues to meaning provide the second language learner with more sources of information with which to negotiate meaning in the classroom.

Saville-Troike (1987) investigated the communication of speakers who lack a common language. She found that context played a crucial role in successful interaction. She concludes that negotiation of meaning begins when participants' share a script for communicative situations. The experienced teachers in her study

were often able to anticipate students' questions and needs by making a rich interpretation of the intended communication even though they could not understand their students' language. Within these classroom situations, the sequence, role, and intent of the communication aided the teachers in making possible interpretations of meaning. Although this study was undertaken with subjects who did not share a common language, it offers important implications for the early grades of immersion when students are in the developing stages of their second language and teachers must rely heavily on the classroom and communicative context to negotiate meaning .

Heath (1986) has examined the kinds of language used in both home and school settings. From her observations, she concludes that implicit in the American school curriculum are six very specific kinds of language demands. First, students need to use language to label and describe the objects, events, and information that "non-intimates" present them. This language function in school typically takes place in form of "display" or "factual" questions where the teacher already knows the answer. A second common language function is the use of language to recount past events or information in predictable order and format. Heath refers to this function as "event casts" and gives the following example to illustrate: "Teacher to class: 'What happened the other day when someone didn't follow the rules for putting books away?'" A third type of language used is that needed to follow directions from oral and written sources. This function includes

many of the management routines found in school - lining up for recess, changing groups, preparing to go home. A fourth demand is the use of language to sustain and maintain the social interactions of the group. In school, this often means subordinating individual or personal goals to maintain group relations. Thus, students are taught to share, to wait their turn, etc,. The use of language to obtain information from non-intimates is the fifth demand. Children need to know how to request and clarify information. Once they are given information, they are expected to generalize from one situation to other similar situations. For instance, the procedures for cleaning up might be the same regardless of the kind of project that students are working on at any given time. Finally, the sixth demand is the ability to use language to account for one's unique experiences, to link these experiences to generally known ideas or events, and to create new information or integrate ideas in innovative ways.

Heath's work offers valuable information about the language of school and has clear implications for the kinds of language skills that the standard school curriculum demands of immersion students. To do well in school immersion students must be able to use their second language for all the linguistic tasks described above. It is precisely through these language functions that they will negotiate meaning in context-reduced and cognitively demanding classroom situations.

The Role of Interaction in the Negotiation of Meaning

The third area of literature to be surveyed in this paper deals

with the role of interaction in the negotiation of meaning. Before discussing language learning, however, it is necessary to consider the topic within the broader context of human development theory. The interactionist perspective is reflected in the view of human development that draws predominantly from the work of the Russian psychologist Vygotsky and others such as Jerome Bruner who belong to a school of social science referred to as "Neo-Vygotskianism." A key feature of this school of human development is that higher-order functions develop out of social interaction. Vygotsky (1978) talked about the "Zone of Proximal Development" which he defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by individual problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

Tharp and Gallimore (1988) apply the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to the classroom: "Teaching consists in assisting performance through the ZPD. Teaching can be said to occur when assistance is offered at points in the ZPD at which performance requires assistance" (p. 31). Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) coined the metaphor "scaffolding" to describe the ideal role of the teacher in assisting the learner through the ZPD. The teacher's responsibility in the interactionist view is to structure and model appropriate solutions to problems by building a scaffold from the learner's current state of competence which extends his/her skills or knowledge to a higher level of competence.

The major implication of interactionist theory for language

learning is that language is learned by taking part in social interaction. According to Wells (1981), children learn their first language through interaction with caregivers "which gives due weight to the contribution of both parties, and emphasizes mutuality and reciprocity in the meanings that are constructed and negotiated through talk" (p. 115). In second language learning, the importance of interaction is increasingly emphasized. Krashen takes the position that interaction is only important because it serves as the impetus for more comprehensible input. However, others have taken a stronger stand on the critical role of interaction in second language acquisition. Swain (1985), for example, states that:

> Comprehensible output...is a necessary mechanism of acquisition independent of the role of comprehensible input. Its role is, at minimum, to provide opportunities for contextualized, meaningful use, to test out hypotheses about the target language, and to move the learner from a purely semantic analysis of language to a syntactic analysis of it (p. 252).

Compelling evidence for the need for interaction or the opportunity to use the second language productively can be found in multiple studies of immersion programs both in the United States and Canada. These studies consistently show that immersion students achieve native-like command of the receptive skills of listening and reading, but continue to have persistent, non-native features in their speaking and writing.

In a recent study entitled "Immersion French in Secondary Schools: `The Goods' and the 'The Bads'," Swain and Lapkin (1986) discuss findings of studies carried out in Toronto, Ottawa, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick, Canada, with secondary school French immersion students. They found that there was continued overall development of French skills in the secondary school; however, the students continued to show the weakest development in speaking and writing, particularly with regard to grammatical acquisition. As is the case in virtually all immersion programs, the students had relatively little opportunity to use French outside of class. Importantly, however, it also appears that they had relatively little opportunity to use the language in class. To test these conclusions, the researchers left a tape recorder running for a day in each of 19 grade 3 and grade 6 immersion classes. Analysis of the grade 6 recordings showed that 81% of all student utterances consisted of a single word, a phrase, or a clause. Thus, while immersion students receive a great deal of comprehensible input (approximately 4000 hours of instruction in the foreign language in a total immersion program in elementary school), in actual fact they have relatively limited opportunities to actually use the language and produce comprehensible output.

More recently, a study by Hawkins (1988) looked for instances of scaffolding or assisted performance in the second language setting. After extensive observation, she found that scaffolding only occurred in classroom situations which were highly interactive and cognitively demanding. Thus, true teaching in the Tharp and

Gallimore sense can only occur when students are given the opportunity to negotiate meaning in interactive, cognitively demanding situations which in Swain's words push the learner "toward the delivery of a message that is ... conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately"(1985, p. 249).

Thus far in our discussion of negotiation of meaning, we have been concerned with the importance of interaction between the teacher and the learner for the facilitative benefits of language learning. It is also important to consider the potential benefits of interaction between learners in the negotiation of meaning process. One excellent way to convert to a more communicatively-oriented classroom is through the use of group work. Long and Porter (1985) recommend group work as an "...attractive alternative to the teacher-led, 'lockstep' mode and a viable classroom substitute for individual conversations with native speakers." They offer four arguments for the use of group work in second language learning.

First, group work increases language practice opportunities. We know that in teacher-centered classes students do not get much chance to talk. Studies have shown that in a typical class, teachers talk for at least half, and often for as much as two-thirds of any class period. Long and Porter estimate that in an average language class of 30 students in a public secondary school, students have a chance to talk about 30 seconds per lesson - or just one hour per student per year. Of course, immersion classes are different since the second language is used as the medium of

instruction for all or part of the day; consequently, immersion students have much more exposure to the second language. This increased exposure probably accounts for the fact that immersion students develop native-like receptive skills. The example noted previously of the tape-recorded classes in Canada, however, illustrates the point that indeed even with more instruction in the language in the immersion setting, students still have relatively limited opportunities to use the language for any extended period of time.

Secondly, group work improves the quantity and quality of student talk. In their review of the literature, Long and Porter found that second language learners working in groups produce more talk with other learners than with native speakers. Non-natives were found to use a wider range of speech acts in order to negotiate their ideas with their non-native counterparts and also corrected each other more in small groups. Furthermore, in comparison studies, non-natives did not produce any more accurate or grammatical speech when talking with non-natives than in conversations with native speakers. These findings contradict the popular belief that non-natives are not good conversational partners. Quite the opposite appears to be true. Non-natives can offer each other genuine communicative practice that is typically unavailable to them in the environment outside of the immersion classroom or in a tightly controlled teacher-centered classroom.

The third argument is that group work helps individualize instruction. As we all know, a typical classroom contains a great

variety of personalities, attitudes, motivations, interests, cognitive and learning styles, and cultural backgrounds. Add to these general differences, differing levels of second language comprehension, fluency, grammar skills, etc., and there is an even greater myriad of differences. Careful selection of groups and assignments can lead to lessons which are better suited to individual needs. Furthermore, group work promotes a positive affective climate. For many students, being called upon in front of the whole class is very stressful, especially when they must "perform" in a second language. Small groups provide a much less threatening environment, often freeing students up to take more risks. Their fourth argument states that group work motivates learners. This point assumes that an environment which is more tailored to individual differences, is non-threatening, and provides a change of pace from the typical teacher-controlled format, will increase learner motivation.

Work in cooperative learning provides a second example of activities which incorporate an interactive approach to teaching. This approach grew out of concern that competitive classrooms do not promote access to learning for all students equally. To counteract the traditional classroom organizational structure, Kagan (1986) reconfigures the classroom, dividing the class "into small teams whose members are all positively interdependent" (p. 241). In order to accomplish any assigned task, all members of the team have a designated role or responsibility. Groups are assigned a group grade, creating the interdependence on members which makes

cooperative learning different from more general group work activities described in the preceding section.

Research on the value of cooperative learning shows positive results on academic achievement, race relations, and the development of mutual concerns among students in a wide variety of settings, subject areas, and grade levels. Cooperative learning also appears to be particularly effective with low achieving students. However, Slavin (1983) notes that cooperative learning strategies only succeed to the extent that they are carefully and systematically implemented. He cites the following four necessary conditions for successful implementation:

1) A high degree of structure;
2) A regular schedule of learning activities and well-specified learning objectives;
3) Clear individual accountability among team members; and
4) A well-defined reward system, including rewards or recognition for successful groups.

In addition to the more general academic and prosocial advantages that cooperative learning promotes, the technique also holds tremendous potential for language development. McGroarty (1989) notes several major benefits of cooperative learning for enhancing second language learning:

1. Cooperative learning as exemplified in small group work provides frequent opportunity for natural second language practice and negotiation of meaning through talk;
2. Cooperative learning provides an additional way to incorporate

content area and language instruction;

3. Cooperative learning tasks require a variety of materials, with non-verbal, visual, and manipulative means as well as texts used to support instruction; this whole array creates a favorable context for the negotiation of meaning in the immersion class;
4. Cooperative learning models require redefinition of the role of the teacher in ways that allow language teachers to expand their professional skills and deal with meaning as well as form. When teachers deal with meaning as a priority they are engaging in negotiation of meaning; and,
5. Cooperative learning approaches encourage students to take an active role in acquisition of language skills and encourage each other as they work on problems of mutual interest and become more adept at the negotiation of meaning in their second language.

In sum, cooperative learning techniques offer an exciting new challenge to immersion teachers for their well-documented contributions to learning in general, and for the great potential they offer for extended opportunities for second language practice.

Strategies for Negotiation of Meaning

In the introduction of this paper, negotiation of meaning was discussed in terms of the three roles of the immersion teacher in this complex, collaborative process - getting the message across, understanding what the students are trying to say via their second language, and helping students to extend and refine their communication skills. Let's examine some instructional strategies

in terms of these roles and the theoretical bases just reviewed.

In getting the meaning across, immersion teachers use a wide variety of strategies. Effective immersion teachers often use teacher talk, modifying their input to make it more comprehensible. They may talk at a slower rate of speed and attempt clearer enunciation. In the early grades, they may purposefully use shorter, less complex sentences and recycle their vocabulary as much as possible.

In getting the message across, immersion teachers also rely on multiple means to add contextual support, thereby making context-reduced situations more context-embedded. This may take the form of increased use of extra-linguistic cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and pantomime. As discussed earlier, visuals such as pictures, maps, charts, photographs, slides, graphs, and realia (e.g., actual physical objects) add contextual support in context-reduced, cognitively demanding situations. Contextual support can also be increased by drawing on students' background knowledge and experiences and by using these experiences as the point of departure for instruction. This strategy helps students move from the realm of the concrete, their own experience or knowledge, to the more abstract realm of new concepts, and as such promotes learning of the decontextualized language of school.

Another key strategy for getting the meaning across is to build redundancy into instruction. This strategy can take many forms. Immersion teachers provide many examples when introducing new vocabulary. They provide multiple cues to meaning by elaborating

meaning as much as possible, for example, through the use of synonyms, paraphrase, and restatement in addition to exemplification. Another way to add redundancy is to set up instructional routines for opening and closing class, for seat work assignments, and for homework to name a few. Lessons can also be planned so that certain pattern and structures are used consistently in the delivery of instruction. Recall that in the Wong-Fillmore study effective teachers built a degree of predictability into instruction, enabling second language learners to get meaning from the context as well as from the oral language. Finally, review of previously covered materials before moving to new material helps students to see the link between the old and the new, the familiar and the unfamiliar.

The second role of the immersion teacher in the negotiation of meaning - to understand communications from the students - also requires a set of instructional strategies. Overarching these strategies is the notion of "rich interpretation." In attempting to scaffold instruction and move students through the Zone of Proximal Development, immersion teachers must interpret and expand what students say by making sense of their language within the shared context of the lesson, the classroom, or personal relations. In order to make rich interpretations, immersion teachers check frequently for understanding. This may include a variety of question types aimed at checking comprehension and eliciting clarification. These checks for understanding will be tailored to the individual student's level of fluency. Depending upon their

skills, students may be asked to repeat information; expand statements, ask other students questions, or summarize key points. In short, the rich interpretations will provide learners with the comprehensible input they need to grow linguistically, or in Vygotsky's terms, to move with assistance from the teacher from their actual developmental level to their level of potential development.

Another strategy for understanding communications from the students is to teach students how to use the second language for communication. In other words, students need to learn the functional language they need for "managing" communication and miscommunication. For example, students at an early stage in immersion need to learn to say "I don't understand" or "I don't know." They need to have the functional language for asking for help. In later grades, they need to learn how to seek clarification - "Excuse me, would you please repeat that?" "Pardon me, would you mind giving another example of X?" They need to communicate that they do not know how to express something - "I'm not sure how to say this, but what I mean is..." By teaching students strategies for managing communication, students will provide teachers with more input for making rich interpretations and enable the immersion teacher to provide more immediate and more relevant feedback to the learner.

Helping students extend and refine their communication skills is the third role of the immersion teacher. The most obvious conclusion from the review of the literature is that interaction

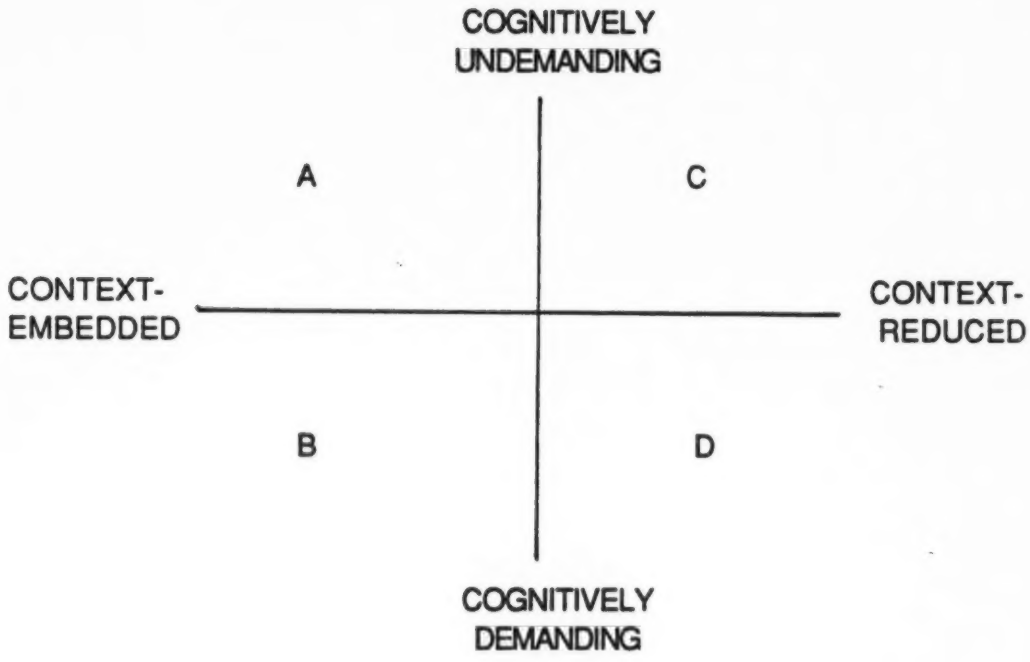
is a critical variable in language learning. Immersion students need to use the second language productively in order to extend and refine their skills throughout elementary school. In the lower elementary grades, students learn language through hands-on, experiential activities. As their language skills develop, the demands become greater. Recall Heath's description of the language of school. To do well academically, students need to perform label quests (i.e., name items), meaning quests (i.e., give the meaning of words, events, behaviors), and event casts (i.e, provide narratives of events in the past and present). By the time students reach the upper elementary grades, the emphasis shifts to the more decontextualized academic language discussed by Cummins. At this point in schooling, the major modes of learning are reading and listening to lectures. But as Swain has cautioned, immersion students need to be "pushed" to produce comprehensible output throughout all levels of instruction. Only through extended opportunities to use the language productively will immersion students continue to grow linguistically across all skill areas. Instructional strategies such as group work and cooperative learning are useful techniques for providing students with opportunities for meaningful and extended practice with the second language.

This paper began by asking two questions: What does negotiation of meaning entail? What is its significance for you the immersion teacher? Hopefully, the "whats" of negotiation of meaning are clear from the instructional strategies discussed and from the

extended discussion of the ideas and research which form its theoretical support. In trying to get at the essence of the process of negotiation of meaning, many adjectives have been used - complex, explicit, creative, imaginative, reciprocal, developmental, etc. It is now up to you, the immersion teacher, to make your own rich interpretation of this challenging process in your classroom.

Figure 1

RANGE OF CONTEXTUAL SUPPORT AND DEGREE OF COGNITIVE INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES



From: J. Cummins. "The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students." Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework (1981). Sacramento, CA: Office of Bilingual Bicultural Education.

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